

prove the Contrary, it's preposterously don't of him to give us his Use of Reproof, before he has clear'd his Doctrine.

However, I owe him many thanks for putting me in mind how Protestant Religion was first Establish'd here in England: It was indeed by the mighty hand of God influencing the Publick Councils of the Nation, so that all imaginable care was taken both by Prince and People, to Rescue themselves from under the *Romish* Yoke; and accordingly most Excellent *Laws* were made against the Usurpation and Tyranny of that Man of Sin. Our Noble Ancestors in those days did not Palliate a want of Zeal for their Religion, with a lazy Pretence of Trusting in Gods Providence; but together with their Prayers to, and Affiance in Heaven, they joynd the Acts of their own Duty, without which (they very well knew) they had no reason to expect a Blessing from it.

But now be pleas'd to take notice of the Candor of this worthy *Considerer*, Nothing less will serve his turn, than the proving all the Voters for the Bill, guilty of the highest Perjury; For (says he) *they have all sworn in the Oath of Allegiance to bear Faith and True Allegiance to His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors: But the Duke is Heir, Ergo, &c.* A very hopefull Argument indeed! But what if it should happen, (as it is neither impossible nor very improbable to imagine it) that the next Heir to the Crown should commit Treason, and Conspire the death of the present Possessor, and for this Treason should not only be Attained by Parliament, but Executed too; Pray Mr. *Considerer*, would the Parliament in this case be guilty of Murder and Perjury? I am confident you will not say it. If therefore the next Heir become obnoxious to the Government in a lower degree, why may not the same Authority proportion the punishment, and leave him his Life, but debar him of the Succession? This I say only to shew the Absurdity of his Argument.

My Answer is this: No Man can bear Allegiance to two Persons at the same time; nor can Allegiance be ever due to a Subject, and therefore my Obligation by the word [*Heir*] in the Oath, does not Commence till such Heir has a present Right to, or Actual possession of the Crown; which if he never attains, either by reason of Death, or any other Act that incapacitates and bars him, then can my Obligation to him by the word *Heir* in the Oath never have a beginning.

But besides all this, it cannot be denied but that Mr. *Considerer's* Doctrine does bring great inconveniences on Succession; for the next Heir (by his way of arguing) is let loose from all the Restrictions and Penalties of Humane Laws; and has no other Tyes upon him, not to snatch the Crown out of the hands of the Possessor, than purely those of his own Conscience, which is worthy Mr. *Considerer's* highest consideration.

I shall only take notice of one Objection more, and then conclude (fearing I have too much trespass'd on your patience already).

It's very hard (says he) that a Man should lose his Inheritance because he is of this or that Perswasion in matters of Religion.

And truly, Gentlemen, were the Case only so, I should be intirely of his mind: But alas! Popery (what ever Mr. *Considerer* is pleas'd to insinuate) is not an harmless innocent perswasion of a Number of Men, differing from others in matters relating to Christian Religion; but is really and truly a different Religion from Christianity it self. Not is the Inheritance he there mentions, an Inheritance only of *Black Acre* and *White Acre* without any Office annexed, which requires him to be *par Officio*: But the Government and Protection of several Nations, the making War and Peace for them, the preservation of their Religion, the disposal of publick Places and Revenues, the Execution of all Laws, together with many other things of the greatest importance, are in this Case claimed by the word *Inheritance*; which if you consider, and at the same time reflect upon the Enslaving and Bloody Tenents of the Church of *Rome*, more particularly the Hellish and Damnable Conspiracy those of that Communion are now carrying on against our Lives, our Religion, and our Government; I am confident you will think it as proper for a Wolf to be a Shepherd, as it is for a Papist to be the *Defender of our Faith*, &c.

The Old Gentleman had no sooner ended his Discourse, but I returned him my hearty thanks, for the Trouble he had been pleas'd to give himself on this Occasion; and I could not but acknowledge he had given me great Satisfaction in that Affair; what it will give thee, *Charles*, I know not, I am sure I parted from him very Melancholy for having been a Fool so long. *Adieu.*

I am thy Affectionate,

J. D.

LETTER

FROM A

Gentleman in the *Country*

TO HIS

Friend at *London*,

CONCERNING A

CONFERENCE

Between some

CLERGYMEN

At *West-Dereham* in *Norfolk*,

And some

QUAKERS,

December the 8th. 1698.

Printed for, and Sold by the Book-sellers of *London* and *West-*
minster, 1698.

TO THE
GENTLEMAN IN THE COUNTRY
TO HIS
Friend at London
CONCERNING A
CONFERENCE
CLERGY-MEN
IN THE Diocese of Wiltshire
And
CUAKERS

December the 31st. 1698.

Printed for and Sold by the Trustees of London and Wiltshire

*A Letter from a Gentleman in the Country,
To his Friend at London.*

SIR,

OUr Country being filled with the Discourse of a Dispute that was appointed at *West-Dereham* in *Norfolk*, the 8th. Instant, between some of the *Clergy*, and some of the *Quakers*; the noise of which I doubt not but hath reached your City, was willing to give you some brief Account, being there amongst many other People, whose curiosity led them to that place on this occasion. The *Quakers* came about the time appointed, which was Ten a Clock; but the *Clergy* and many People were before in the Church, and the Doors shut, and Watch-men set to attend the Doors, to prevent the People filling the Church, before the *Quakers*, concerned, came: And when they were come, the Church-Warden of the place introduced them, and a Watch-man went before them, to make way to the Scaffold prepared for them, which was directly opposite to that on which our *Clergymen* stood, on which they mounted by a Ladder, and this was in Service time, which continued about half an hour after the *Quakers* came in; who all, according to their usual manner, stood with their Hatts on all the time.

When that was ended, one of the *Quakers* took the boldness on the Scaffold to kneel down, and prayed, which our *Clergymen* bore with; when that was over, our *Clergymen* began to inform the People, that the *Quakers* having challenged them, or any of their Cloth; upon which, our *Clergy* had charg'd the whole Body of the *Quakers*, to be Guilty of the following Heads, *viz.*

First, *With Blasphemy against God, against Christ, and the holy Scriptures.*

Second, *With Contempt of Magistracy.*

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Third,

Third, *With denying the Ordinances of Jesus Christ, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.*

Fourth, *And that the Light within as taught by them, was the Ground of all these Blasphemies and Errors held by them.*

And offered to prove it out of the *Quakers own Books.*

Upon which a *Quaker* stood up, and gave a Relation how this business began, and made a speech of about a quarter of an hour, and told the Auditory, that this was begun by some *Clergy-men* espousing one *Francis Bugg*, that had writ against the *Quakers*, and in conclusion, denied that they were the *Challengers*, and affirmed that the *Priests* were, as they called our *Ministers*, which they denied.

Then the *Quakers* urged that the Letters that had passed between them and the *Clergy-men* might be read in order, and doubted not, but thereby it would appear that the *Parsons*, and not they, were the *Challengers*, which, after some debate, was consented to, and read.

When they were read, the *Clergy* still denied it, but the *Quakers* insisted upon a passage in one of their first Papers unto the *Clergy-men*, wherein they writ to them, to this effect.

If you, or any of your Cloth, see meet to Charge us in your own Names, and will give it under your hands, and appoint time and place, allowing us the necessary conveniences usual on such occasions, we may, and we shall be willing to meet you.

Then said the *Quakers*, *We appeal to the People, whether this be a Challenge, seeing we only in our own defence proffered to meet them, on the conditions hinted, viz. if they, or any of them, see meet, we told them they might Charge us; and they have now charg'd us, and appointed time and place, but have not allow'd us what is usual on such occasions, which is a Copy of our Charge, and the Titles of the Books and Pages, out of which they pretend to prove their Charge, and therefore are Arbitrary and Unreasonable.* And on this the *Quakers* earnestly insisted, and proffer'd to pay for a Copy, rather than go without their Charge, and confidently urg'd, they were not Conscious to themselves of any such things in their Books, however were willing to

to Tryal, if they might have a Copy of their full Charge, and a mutual agreement of the Preliminaries.

But the *Clergy-men* still urg'd to come to proof, and were not willing to grant the Challenge lay on their side.

But the *Quakers* urg'd it, and when ever they went to proceed to proof, called out for a Copy of their Charge, as before.

Thus it held for many Hours; and if the Parsons began to go to their Proofs, one or another of the *Quakers* would stand up, and cry out against their Unfair Proceedings, and tell the People of the Heinousness of the Charge, and how it affected their Lives; another crying out, *This Charge Reflects upon the Government, who have been favourable to us, and esteem'd us as Protestants, and under a Christian Profession of Faith (i.e. concerning God, Christ, and the holy Scriptures) and for the Favours received we are thankful to God and Them; and hope we shall never give any just Occasion of Offence, to cause them to abridge us of this Favour.*

The *Clergy* endeavour'd to Silence them, but could not; they called to the People to *Hiss* them, and Hallowed to drown'd their Voices, and stop them; but they still cried out, as before, and would make Confession of their Faith, when the *Clergy* would have gone on to prove their Charges: Upon which some Justices of the Peace being by, one of the Parsons called out, that they deserved the Stocks; and a Watch Man Arew near the Scaffold the *Quakers* were on, and lifted up his Bill; at which one of the *Quakers* calls out to the People, saying, *You may see that they want to be at their old work of Persecution, which some of them have formerly been in; and a great Harrangue they made on this, and gave Books amongst the People; and then boldly denied our Parsons to be Ministers of Christ, and urg'd them to prove their Mission; which they not joyning issue with, the Quakers, upon their refusing to give them a Copy of their Charge, and not proving the Quakers to be the Challengers, occasioned some to say, What Blockheads are our Parsons.* But one Justice, seeing how it was, and that there was no likelihood of a Regular Proceeding, propos'd

after Five Hours were near spent, to break up the Meeting; but the *Quakers*, according to their usual Stiffness, urged for a Copy of their Charge, and to agree upon, Time, Terms, and Preliminaries, to Dispute it out.

But one of the *Clergy* then said, *Let it End here*; but the *Quakers* urged the Grievousness of the Charge, and that they were all Condemned to Hell, if 'twas true, that they were Blasphemers, and were liable to Death here, and never to be forgiven hereafter.

Then one of the Ministers said, *We do not Charge the Quakers of this present Generation with Blasphemy, they are Orthodox*; but would have them deny the Writings of their ancient Friends, wherein these things were. Then one of the *Quakers* nimbly turns upon our Ministers, *Will you deny William Thorp, who spoke against Tithes, both as to the giving and taking of them, and against the Viciousness, Pride and Covetousness of the Priest, and others, that spoke against Tithes, as Swinderley, &c. Will you deny your ancient Friends Writings? If not, why should you thus press upon us to deny Ours, especially before we know what it is; for we can get no Copy of your Charge, neither Titles nor Pages of Books; but William Thorp you may find in the Book of Martyrs?* The Justice, perceiving the Resoluteness of the *Quakers*, and Night coming on, pressed for a Conclusion of the Meeting, which then the *Clergy* and the *Quakers* did comply with; yet the former, *viz.* Our *Clergy* were forced to let them know, that they thought it hard if they could not have the liberty of their own Church; and so it ended, and nothing of a Regular Dispute come to: By which the Auditory were greatly disappointed of their Expectations; And therefore good Sir, I think to conclude this my Scribble, which I hope you will be pleased to Pardon, with some of the words, in a Protestation to the whole Church of England, in Fox's Martyrology, *viz.* 'If there cannot be an End of our Disputing and Contending one against another, yet let there be a Moderation in our Affections. And in as much as it is the good Will

a short time; yet let us strive, in the mean while, what we
 can to amend the Malice of the time with Mutual Humanity.
 They that be in Errors, let them not disdain to learn:
 They which have great Tallents of Knowledge committed,
 instruct in Simplicity them that be Simple: No Man liveth
 in that Common Wealth where nothing is amiss; yet because
 God hath so placed Us, *English Men*, here in one Common
 Wealth, also in one Church, as in one Ship together, let us not
 mangle or divide the Ship, which being divided perisheth:
 But every Man serve with diligence and discretion in his
 order, wherein he is called. They that sit at the Helm,
 keep well to the Point of the Needle, to know how the
 Ship goeth, and whether it should, whatsoever Weather be-
 tides, the Needle well touched with the Stone of God's
 Word, will never fail: Such as labour at the Oars start for
 no Tempest, but do what they can to keep from the Rocks:
 Likewise they which be in inferiour Rooms, take heed they
 move no Sedition nor Disturbance against the Rowers and
 Marriners. No Storm so dangerous to a Ship on the Sea, as
 is Discord and Disorder in a Weal publick; what Coun-
 tries and Nations, what Kingdoms and Empires, what Ci-
 ties, Towns and Houses *Discord* hath dissolved, in Stories is
 manifest; I need not spend time in rehearsing Examples.

And truly Sir, considering this, and that we are all Prote-
 stants, and that the Wisdom of our present King, and his great
 Council, the Parliament, whom I pray God bless and long
 preserve, have seen meet, for uniting the King's Subjects in
 Heart and Affection, to indulge Protestant Dissenters in the
 Exercise of their Conscience, and have Recognized the *Quakers*
 as Protestants, and directed a Christian Belief for them to sub-
 scribe and manifest that they Believe in God, in Jesus Christ his
 Eternal Son, and that the holy Scripture of the Old and New
 Testament were given forth by Divine Inspiration, which I
 hear the *Quakers* own, and by their Book then given away,
 called, *The Christianity of the Quakers asserted*, it appears, they
 hold and own many Christian Doctrines: I conceive it may